

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VISITATION BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD IN THE BOARDROOM  
ARMAGH PLANETARIUM AT 11.15 AM ON TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2022**

Present: His Grace, the Most Reverend J McDowell (Chair), The Very Reverend Dean S Forster, The Venerable Archdeacon T Scott (Acting Chair), Revd Canon D Hilliard (via Zoom), Revd Canon J Moore, Archbishop E Martin, Mr G Cox, Ms S Leslie and Mr R Wilson

Apologies: The Venerable Archdeacon E Cairns, Revd Canon W M Adair, Revd Canon W B Paine, Rev Canon R J N Porteus, Revd Canon Dr P Thompson, Professor A Fitzsimmons and Mr J Briggs (Chair of Management Committee)

In attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Dr M Sarzi (Head of Research), Mr L Knox (Head of Finance and Income Generation), Mr S Brown (Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee) and Mrs L Brown (Corporate Manager)

**1. OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a particular word of welcome to Ms Samantha Leslie to her first meeting of the Board of Governors. Ms Leslie thanked the Board for having invited her to join.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were recorded as noted above.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 The Chair reminded members and officers of the need to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest associated with any item on the Agenda, either now or at the relevant point during the meeting, noting that there were already registered conflicts of interest on record from himself and Dean Forster, who were both Governors of the Royal School and from Mr Wilson with a number of conflicts. Agenda Item 3 would be conducted 'In Committee' due to these previously declared conflicts.

3.2 There were no further conflicts of interest declared at this point.

*Archbishop McDowell, Dean Forster and Mr Wilson temporarily withdrew from the meeting and Archdeacon Scott took the Chair at 11.17 am.*

**4. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM REMOVED**

*Archbishop McDowell, Dean Forster and Mr Wilson re-joined the meeting at this juncture.*

4.10 The Acting Chair reported that the 'In Committee' matters had been dealt with properly and formally addressed. The Archbishop thanked both Archdeacon Scott for chairing this matter.

*Archbishop McDowell presided over the remainder of the meeting.*

## 5. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL VISITATION OF 19 MAY 2021

The minutes of the Annual Visitation of the Board of Governors of 19 May 2021 were reviewed, approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

## 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 The Chair referred to the paper detailing progress on matters arising from previous meetings. It was noted that of the 13 outstanding actions, eight had been completed and five remained ongoing.

6.2 With regards to Charity Trustee Status, the Chair reminded Members that the proposal was to transfer the role of Charity Trustee from the Board to the Management Committee, which would also require a change of name for the Charity from 'The Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium' to 'Armagh Observatory and Planetarium'. He sought the Board's opinion on this proposal.

6.2.1 Mrs Corvan advised that, to enable these matters to be progressed a formal resolution was required and she briefly explained why the proposal had come about, the functions of the Charity Trustee aligning better with the role of the Management Committee and only meeting once a year as a Board might not satisfy the role of Charity Trustee in the way that it should.

6.2.2 **On the proposal of Revd Canon Moore, seconded by Mr Cox the Board agreed to:**

- **change the registered charity name from 'The Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium' to 'Armagh Observatory and Planetarium'; and**
- **delegate the role of Trustee to the members of the Management Committee, to be progressed once the process of name change had been concluded.**

6.2.3 Based on his experience in similar organisations where such a decision had been taken, Archbishop Martin suggested that a paper outlining the residual role of the Governors, now that the role of Trustee would be transferred to the Management Committee, would be helpful to clarify and eliminate confusion. He also suggested some training or induction for the new body, to prevent disagreements later.

6.2.4 In welcoming Archbishop Martin's suggestion Mr Cox explained that the Management Committee would get its powers in two ways - delegation from the Board of Governors and by way of free-standing obligations because individuals of the Management Committee were signed up to the Charity Commission standards. Ms Leslie commented that it would also be useful to identify any anomalies there may be between the North and South regulations.

6.2.5 The Archbishop pointed out that AOP would be governed by the Northern regulations. Practically, he felt the change would not make a huge difference.

6.2.6 The Board noted that Archbishop Martin's suggestion did not impact on the decision already taken. Mrs Corvan undertook to prepare a summary document and to circulate via email.

6.3 There were no further matters arising raised.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

- 7.1 The Chair advised that the term of office for the Chair of the Management Committee was due to expire and they needed to consider renewal or otherwise. Having conducted a performance review with Mr Briggs and discussed with Senior Management, they were content with what he had achieved and had helped AOP to achieve and Mr Briggs was content to continue in the role of Chair, at what was a fairly crucial point for AOP given his involvement with the development, though perhaps not for the full 5-year term. The Chair asked if the Board was therefore content to recommend an extension for a further term.
- 7.1.1 **On the proposal of Mr Cox, seconded by Archbishop Martin, the Board agreed to extend Mr Briggs' appointment to Chair of the Management Committee for a further 5 year term.**
- 7.2 The Chair advised that the Board nominated three representatives to the Management Committee and that the nominees, Revd Canon Adair, Mr Greg Cox and Mr Roger Wilson, were content to continue.
- 7.2.1 **On the proposal of Archdeacon Scott, seconded by Dean Forster, the Board endorsed the continuing nomination of Revd Canon Adair and Messrs Cox and Wilson to the Management Committee.**
- 7.3 The Chair explained that the Partnership Agreement, which had previously been circulated, would supersede the Management Statement Financial Memorandum (MSFM) as the new relationship document between AOP and DfC. The Board's approval to the draft Partnership Agreement was required.
- 7.3.1 Professor Burton explained that the Partnership Agreement formally defined AOP's relationship with the Department and had evolved to make AOP somewhat more autonomous. He advised that he had wanted to be clear it was not just a transactional one between the Department and AOP and in particular in relation to his own role and drew attention to point 11.1 which now defined his role as being to run AOP's business to fulfil the statutory functions of the Board. He advised that he was content that this wording recognised the different nature of AOP from other ALBs.
- 7.3.2 Mrs Corvan explained that, if approved by the Board, the draft would be taken through DfC's approval system and would not therefore be implemented for some time and that once it gained DfC approval it would require changes to the Terms of Reference of various Committees.
- 7.3.3 The Chair asked if the Board was content with the Partnership Agreement and to delegate authority to the Management Committee to make whatever changes that would flow from it.
- 7.3.4 Mr Cox added that, since the Chair would be required to sign the document, the Board should also delegate authority that if it came back in the same or similar form, the Chair could sign it.
- 7.3.5 **On the proposal of Mr Cox, seconded by Archbishop Martin, the Board approved the Partnership Agreement and delegated authority to the Chair to sign it and to the Management Committee to approve the necessary changes required as a result of its implementation.**
- 7.4 The Chair referred to the Governance Effectiveness Report which made a number of recommendations and asked that if the Board was content it give delegated authority to the Management Committee to change the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committees.
- 7.4.1 Mrs Corvan briefly explained the current process whereby the Sub-Committees held a meeting and reported back to the Management Committee. To streamline the number of papers going to the

Management Committee and the length of time taken it was proposed that the Sub-Committees could have some delegated authority to consider and approve some matters and to report by exception to the Management Committee on others. The Management Committee had not fully considered the paper and it was proposed to do so in June, as a consequence there may be some matters that changed, but the idea in principle was to free up some time on the Management Committee for more strategic issues. What could and could not be on the list was yet to be agreed with the Management Committee.

7.4.2 The Board was asked to grant approval to the Management Committee to delegate authority to its Sub-Committees broadly along the lines of what had been outlined in the paper and to approve the changes required to Terms of Reference for the Management Committee, ARAC and SPRC.

7.4.3 **On the proposal of Mr Cox, seconded by Revd Canon Moore, the Board granted the Management Committee authority to delegate some of its activities to its Sub-Committees and to approve the necessary changes required to Terms of Reference as a result.**

## **8. MATTERS FOR REPORT AND APPROVAL**

### **8.1 Report from Mr J Briggs, Management Committee Chair**

The Chair advised that since Mr Briggs was unable to attend he had provided a written report, which had been circulated. There were also a number of Members of the Management Committee present who could answer any questions.

### **8.2 Management Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

The minutes of the four meetings of the Management Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) held since the last Visitation had been included with the Papers.

8.2.1 As Chair of the ARAC, Mr Brown reported that in general in terms of audit the situation was solid and there was nothing concerning. There was always concern about finance because of the nature of public sector finance, but nothing worrying. The biggest single risk that AOP faced was that of cyber security. AOP systems were divided into internal systems such as emails, finance etc and scientific systems and the latter linked very much with the outside world such as universities and international researchers. A lot had been achieved in relation to cyber security over the past year or more and the latest audit report had recommended the need for a detailed strategy. AOP needed to configure all the activity undertaken into a renewed strategy and to take that forward, in the hope of achieving Cyber Essentials standard. Mr Brown explained that the difficulty was for the Researchers and ensuring that whatever measures were put in place did not get in the way of their ease of communication with the outside world, sharing copious amounts of information internationally and their ability to work. Workshops were planned, with external expertise, to assist in developing this and providing a solution that balanced the risk with the ease of use of the systems.

8.2.2 The Chair acknowledged that all organisations were facing cyber security risks and thanked Mr Brown for his update.

8.2.3 Mr Cox advised that the Management Committee meetings that he attended were incredibly thoroughly prepared and great work was undertaken by the Corporate Services Team, Professor Burton's Team and by the Chair himself and that the Board could be assured that matters received diligent scrutiny, with challenging questions posed.

8.2.4 The Chair welcomed this assurance.

- 8.2.5 Mr Brown added that there was good attention to detail at a sufficient level with good expertise by those making comment.
- 8.2.6 In response to a query from Archbishop Martin regarding withdrawal of the Whistleblowing Policy, which he had noticed had occurred at one of the meetings, and whether there had been any progress on this, Mrs Corvan briefly explained that information had been received on the day of the meeting from the Audit Office that required a technical change to the policy, the change had subsequently been made. She added that all policies were reviewed on a cyclical basis. The specific advice had related to external whistleblowing. She confirmed there was a Policy with approved changes in place.
- 8.2.7 In relation to cyber security, Ms Leslie advised that on any of the Boards she sat on in the Republic of Ireland she had an iPad solely for that purpose and enquired if there was any thoughts on providing equipment. Mr Brown advised that Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) was a key part of the review to be undertaken. Mrs Corvan added that they had identified the weakness with BYOD where equipment wasn't kept up-to-date with the latest software and that if Members thought it was an expense that was relevant and needed to be considered then AOP could make a case to the Department for funding. The area of BYOD, particularly for people working on their personal systems, would be considered in the workshop, however it was recognised that for those working in other organisations it may conflict with their own security systems.
- 8.2.8 Mr Brown added that 2 Factor Authentication was in place.
- 8.2.9 Mrs Corvan explained that whilst AOP was moving forward, cyber criminals were always finding ways around systems and so there was a need to constantly keep this area under review.
- 8.2.10 **On the proposal of Archbishop Martin, seconded by Archdeacon Scott the Minutes of the Management Committee and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings were approved.**
- 8.3 **Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21**  
**Annual Report 2021/22**  
Mr Knox reported that at the 2021 meeting the Archbishop had been granted delegated authority to sign the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 when audited. The Audit had been completed and the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 signed by the Archbishop on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and subsequently filed with the Executive Office on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. **The Board of Governors retrospectively approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21.**
- 8.3.1 The draft Annual Report 2021/22 had previously been circulated, however, due to the proximity to Financial Year End the accounts for 2021/22 had not yet been finalised.
- 8.3.2 Professor Burton advised that the Annual Report was in draft form and had not yet been reviewed for consistency of writing, however, it would not change in form. Mrs Corvan added that the Board needed to delegate authority to the Management Committee to approve the accounts and that the Archbishop be granted delegated authority to sign off the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22.
- 8.3.3 In response to a query from the Chair as to whether there was a case for holding the Annual Visitation later in the year, Mrs Corvan explained that they tried to hold it between the March and June meetings of the Management Committee, to have an end of year picture, but it had been scheduled a little too early this time. Mid to late-May would give time to have finalised draft accounts available. Mr Knox confirmed this too, adding that they also needed reports from external bodies. The Chair suggested this should be borne in mind when setting the date for the 2023 Visitation.
- 8.3.4 Mr Knox pointed out that the Accounts would have to be signed by the Chair of the Trustees at the time of signing them off.

- 8.3.5 Mr Cox added that it was implicit that if there was an issue with the Accounts then the Management Committee or Mr Knox would be in contact with the Board with any material it would need to consider.
- 8.3.6 The Chair added that he was in the same position with a couple of other organisations where he was not a Trustee but signed the accounts as Chair of the overall body.
- 8.3.7 Mrs Corvan added that, as had previously been agreed, if there were any changes to the Board's role these would be set out in a briefing paper.
- 8.3.8 **The Board approved the draft 2021/22 Annual Report, subject to minor amendments, delegated authority to the Management Committee to approve the accounts and to the Archbishop to sign the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 on its behalf.**
- 8.4 **Management Report for 2021/22**  
At the outset Professor Burton commented that they were meeting in person for the first time in three years and on the significance of having two Archbishops in the room which was symbolic in terms of AOP's way forward and vision, adding that there had been two Archbishops present when the Planetarium had been formed.
- 8.4.1 By way of introduction, Professor Burton explained that the role of the Board was to ensure that the principal functions of the institution were being performed. The principal functions being conducting research, education and outreach activities and formally these were all documented in the Annual Report. In terms of statistics, there had been approximately 100 scientific papers and 100 presentations of one form or another over the previous year. A 5-year Strategic Plan for 2021-26 had been produced setting out the vision for a world class centre for research, education and outreach.
- 8.4.2 Professor Burton took Members through his report and highlighted the main achievements throughout the year in relation to Research; Education and Outreach Activities; History and Heritage Activities and Mullinure Lands. The Director's Report to each of the four Management Committee meetings since the 2021 Visitation had also been included as accompanying papers.
- 8.4.3 In terms of Research, the Board noted:
- three highlights from astronomical research led by Prof Jorick Vink; Prof Simon Jeffrey and Dr Marc Sarzi;
  - the positive Research Excellence Framework (REF)-like Review of the quality of research outputs;
  - the change in personnel of the Öpik Fellow;
  - financial contributions to international telescope projects, possible due to funding from DfC;
  - Professor Caitriona Jackman had delivered the biannual Robinson Lecture;
  - the circumstances surrounding the meteorological record relating to the hottest day in Armagh and Northern Ireland measured in July 2021 and expansion of the weather station and enclosure;
  - a number of AOP astronomers had been appointed to International Astronomical Union positions on its Divisions and Commissions.
- 8.4.4 The Board noted the following matters relating to Education and Outreach:
- general public visitor numbers had increased, however school visitor numbers had not yet returned to pre-COVID levels;
  - the introduction of Friday evening music shows;

- projects undertaken during lockdown to rejuvenate the Planetarium included installation of a new projector system; a Changing Places facility, sensory room, refurbishment of the café, shop and reception areas and a new exhibition area;
- improved offerings, using the new exhibition in the Planetarium, by way of Observatory Tours and Astropark Tours;
- during the pandemic the Education Team had re-invented themselves to provide ‘Science at Home’ which led on to ‘Cosmic Classroom’ and ‘Kids Takeover’. Science at Home had culminated in the development of The Big Book of Experiments and Bright Ideas, funded by STFC, which had been distributed to every primary school throughout Ireland (N and S);
- the software for the Planetarium projectors had been upgraded to Digistar 7;
- a number of new presenter-led shows had been produced in-house;
- AOP’s participation in COP26 (Conference of the Parties 26) and development of the ‘Our Place in the Cosmos’ show.

8.4.5 In terms of History and Heritage, the Board noted:

- progress on development of a Collections Management System (CMS) with the inclusion of a library database;
- an application for Museum Accreditation had been submitted;
- funding had been secured from the National Lottery Heritage Scheme to employ a Collections Officer;
- an application for a PhD position with Queen’s University Belfast to the Northern Bridge Scheme related to studying the Planetarium’s history had been successful;
- the world heritage aspirations; the recent study tour of Birr, Dunsink and Armagh and their inter-relationships and the intention to submit an application to the UK’s UNESCO Tentative List.

8.4.6 With the aid of PowerPoint, the Head of Research gave a brief presentation demonstrating the wide-ranging and world-leading research undertaken at AOP. He advised that research topics ranged from the study of the sun and solar system to distant galaxies and involved international collaborations using and developing new or future observing facilities. He briefly elaborated on three research papers. The first, a theoretical paper relating to impossible black holes was the work of Prof Jorick Vink, Dr Erin Higgins and Gautham Sabhahit and revealed the merger of 70-80 solar mass black holes, not previously thought possible.

8.4.7 The second paper he highlighted was led by Shenghua Yu, a former PDRA of Professor Simon Jeffery, alongside Professor Jeffrey. This was theoretical work in preparation for space based gravitational wave detections and established how well gravitational waves from neutron star–white dwarf binaries would be detected.

8.4.8 The last paper, the work led by Dr Marc Sarzi students Thomas Spriggs and Pablo Galan de Anta and including also Dr Sarzi related to planetary nebulae using their maximum intrinsic luminosity to derive their host-galaxy distance and had been conducted for 21 galaxies and at a record distance.

8.4.9 Ms Leslie said she was fascinated by the updates which highlighted the diversity of AOP from world-class research, to exciting exhibitions through to dog-walkers.

8.4.10 The Chair commented on the significance of AOP’s World Heritage ambitions and recognised the additional work this would involve.

8.4.11 In response to a query from Ms Leslie as to whether there was merit in segmenting the various sections of AOP in finance terms, each with their own budgets and if this would assist in accessing different funding pools, Mr Knox explained that the current finance structure was split into Education, Research and Corporate. Discussion ensued during which it was noted that there were

further layers behind the information provided to the Board which were considered at SMT level and any Management Committee member who wanted further information was encouraged to contact Mr Knox directly to review financial information in more detail. It was also noted that budgets were segmented in a number of different ways to meet AOP's needs such as day-to-day management purposes; funding applications; individual events and or Charity Commission reporting requirements.

- 8.4.12 Professor Burton pointed out that he wanted to avoid compartmentalising budgets as this had happened before the merger and had not been good for the organisation, however, he recognised that understanding the costs associated with public events was very important. Mrs Corvan added that as a public sector body AOP was subject to an incredible amount of governance and bureaucracy and the overheads in dealing with that would probably be deemed significant in the commercial sense, but were necessary to achieve compliance and assist AOP to retain confidence as a body spending public money.
- 8.4.13 Ms Leslie explained that her query was not about trust, but whether it would be beneficial in delivering the Strategy. In this regard, Professor Burton commented that there never had been a budget for History and Heritage and this was something they needed to address. Mrs Corvan added that AOP was keen to learn if this was something Ms Leslie would like to discuss in more detail at a separate meeting. This offer was available to any Board member about any matter they might wish to discuss further. Ms Leslie stated she would be delighted to avail of the opportunity.
- 8.4.14 Archbishop Martin referred to linkages and discussions between Armagh, Birr and Dunsink, which he assumed were currently taking place at Director level, and queried if any thought had been given to having engagement at Governor level of the three bodies, suggesting that engagement at that level in the future might be appropriate. Professor Burton reported that at one time Lord Rosse had been on the Board in Armagh. Professor Burton was on the Board of DIAS and there was a DIAS representative on AOP's Management Committee. Archbishop Martin clarified that he was not advocating more meetings but felt that there should be an opportunity to affirm the work that was going on, perhaps by way of an evening event.
- 8.4.15 Mrs Corvan said this was something AOP would want to progress. With reference to the trips to Birr and Dunsink she said AOP had tried to host a more inclusive event and that bringing others to experience what they had experienced would be worthwhile. At the start of the journey she had felt it was a good exercise in strengthening the partnerships and exploring some joint projects but as they went along it had been enlightening in terms of the heritage and the value of Irish Astronomy and how it was at the fore-front of the world at that point in time. They could organise something like this again for some members if this was deemed to be of interest. A larger more inclusive evening event had originally been planned for Armagh, however they had struggled with a venue. Armagh had hosted a lunch for the visitors from Birr and Dunsink at which representatives from the Historic Environment Division, the Chief Archaeologist's Office and the Council were in attendance and at which there had been great networking.
- 8.4.16 The Chair suggested that another avenue to explore might be the Vatican Observatory.
- 8.4.17 The Board noted that Ms Leslie was also on the Board of Birr and that there was no conflict of interest in this regard at present.
- 8.4.18 Mr Cox reported that over the last twelve months he, along with Mr Brown and the Archbishop had had the opportunity to meet with colleagues in AOP. He felt the Board should recognise the incredible colleagues within the organisation and the great work they had done as AOP emerged from the pandemic, evidenced by the information within Professor Burton's report. He thanked



Professor Burton and asked that Professor Burton thank the Research, Education and Corporate colleagues.

8.4.19 The Chair concurred, paying tribute to the high quality of information and work being carried out and that that had continued. He felt it was remarkable that people were coming back in such high numbers and felt that this was because of the work that had been ongoing.

8.4.20 In thanking the Board for the comments, Professor Burton undertook to report this back to all those at AOP adding that there was a fantastic team across all three areas and whilst coming together and working together had been a challenge they were all working together.

8.4.21 Revd Canon Moore thanked Dr Sarzi for his presentation which she found fascinating.

8.4.22 **The Board noted the Management Report 2021/22.**

#### 8.5 **Corporate Plan Objectives**

Mrs Corvan referred to the activities outlined in Professor Burton's report and explained that the Corporate Plan Objectives Paper which had been circulated set out the objectives, key activities and progress against those for each quarter of 2021/22.

8.5.2 **The Board noted the progress against 2021/22 Corporate Plan Objectives.**

#### 8.6 **Key Performance Indicators**

Mrs Corvan explained that the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) paper provided an update on the quantifiable targets set within the Business Plan, adding that they tried to set challenging targets which sometimes meant they were not achieved. She guided the Board through the report drawing attention to those that had not been achieved and elaborating briefly on the reason for this. The KPIs were also reported quarterly to the Department.

8.6.1 The Chair acknowledged the significant amount of corporate governance requirements.

8.6.2 **The Board noted the progress against 2021/22 KPIs.**

#### 8.7 **Financial Report**

Mr Knox apologised that it had not been possible to provide draft Accounts for 2021/22, however, a financial report highlighting the key information from the financial year had been circulated. Whilst AOP's core budget of £1.729m had remained unchanged for the third successive year, in-year bids for additional funding had been successful and AOP had secured an additional £164,000 Resource and £979,000 Capital funding for a number of projects listed within his report. He pointed out that all these projects took a lot of managing and extended thanks to all those involved.

8.7.1 Mr Knox felt that it had been a good year and drew attention to income from STFC research grants and the second and final year of £50k COVID funding. He pointed out that Research income did not always stay in Research as it included overhead money that contributed to the overall running of the organisation. There had also been significant additional capital grants from the Climate Change Fund.

8.7.2 In terms of the current financial year, Mr Knox explained that the concern in March had been that AOP had been asked to maintain its services but constrain its spend, with escalating costs. He reported that two pressure bids, both of which had been successful and allocated, resulted in AOP beginning the financial year with more funding than it had done for many years. It was also anticipated that there would be more funding available throughout the year.

*Archbishop Martin retired from the meeting at 13.05 pm.*

- 8.7.3 Mr Knox added that the current financial position was an indication of the confidence the Department placed in AOP.
- 8.7.4 The Chair welcomed the update and acknowledged that the financial position was a year-on-year matter. Mr Knox added that consolidated research grants would be up for renewal in the next financial year.
- 8.7.5 **The Board noted the Financial Report.**
- 8.8 **Risk Register April 2022**  
At the outset Mrs Corvan advised that the Risk Register was updated quarterly, and more frequently if something changed. By way of example, she explained that until the budget had been confirmed there had been an extreme risk against finance, which had been reduced to moderate but there remained risks around funding and ambitious income targets had been set. There was an overview provided at the beginning of the register and the changes were tracked and considered by the Management Committee quarterly.
- 8.8.1 Mrs Corvan advised that at present, the only risk with an extreme impact and high likelihood related to cyber security. She said they believed they were doing everything they could to mitigate but that there were challenges in the organisation that they needed to overcome. As part of the JISC education network and NICS network AOP received really good information about threats however, there was a concern that the staff might become apathetic about cyber risk. As previously mentioned, a special workshop was planned.
- 8.8.2 **The Board noted the Risk Register April 2022.**
- 8.9 **Draft 2022/23 Business Plan**  
Professor Burton advised that the draft 2022/23 Business Plan, which had previously been circulated, derived from the Strategy. Divided into the strategic themes it identified operational objectives for the financial year set against how they would be achieved and what success would look like.
- 8.9.1 As with the previous financial year, Mrs Corvan advised that quarterly updates would be provided to the Management Committee on progress against the objectives and the KPIs contained within the Business Plan and an end of year update for the Board. She added that the draft Business Plan still required Departmental approval.
- 8.9.2 Mr Wilson referred to Section 4.4 Pursuing our Priorities and to partnership working and took the opportunity to place on record his acknowledgement of the close relationship that existed between the Council and AOP. Whilst it specifically mentioned the Armagh Leisure Village he said that during the last year there had been a number of strategic areas of work that the team at AOP had been closely aligned with such as the City of Culture Bid and the Armagh Place Plan and they were still looking at World Heritage for Navan and the other royal ancient sites across Ireland. He considered partnership working was a core part of what AOP was and from the Council's perspective it was an important component and was working well at strategic level. He added that the Council viewed AOP as one of the jewels in the crown of the City.
- 8.9.3 In response, Mrs Corvan added that one of the key issues for partnership going forward was around funding, funding opportunities and consideration of joint funding opportunities once the co-design process was sorted out and this would be incredibly important to the ability of the AOP project to succeed. AOP working in partnership with the Council to explore funding and joint-funding opportunities was vital to the success of the collaborative project as it was recognised that getting

onto the DfC capital funding programme was very challenging, but if AOP was able to bring in external funding this would be beneficial.

**8.9.4 The Board approved the draft Business Plan 2022/23.**

**9.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1 Annual Review of Information**

The Archbishop advised that one of the principal objectives of the meeting was that the Board of Governors was content with the quality of information received, an important element of governance, and that it was adequate to their role.

**9.1.1 The Board confirmed that it was content with the quality of information provided.**

9.1.2 The Chair thanked all those involved in providing the information in an intelligible form.

9.1.3 Mr Brown commented that from his experience in the Civil Service, the quality, detail and accuracy of information provided by AOP was exceptional.

9.2 There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their participation.

The meeting ended at 13.15 pm

Signed as a true record of the Meeting

.....  
(Chairman)

Date